

REMARKS

The Official Action of April 21, 2006, has been carefully reviewed. The claims in the application are now **solely** allowable claim 8 rewritten in independent form and the claims which depend therefrom, namely claims 9-18. Based on what is stated in the Official Action, the present application should now be in condition for formal allowance. Such is respectfully requested

Claims 1-7 and 9 have been rejected as obvious from certain prior art. While the applicants do not necessarily agree with these rejections, applicants need not address these rejections in view of the amendments made above in which claims 1-7 have been cancelled, allowable claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form, and claim 9 has been amended to depend from and incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 8.

For the record, the amendments are made without prejudice to applicants' rights, including those rights provided by §120, to pursue broader claims (e.g. commensurate in scope with the cancelled claims) in a continuation application, if applicants choose to do so.

Claim 8 has only been objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim (paragraph 4 on page 4 of the Official Action), and is stated to be "allowable if rewritten in independent form.. ." Applicants understand that claim 8 is deemed by the PTO to define novel and unobvious subject matter under §§102 and 103, and applicants are proceeding in reliance thereof.

Consequently, claims 8 has now been rewritten in independent form. All the other claims depend from and incorporate the subject matter of claim 8, and therefore they also should be in condition for formal allowance. Of these dependent claims, new claim 10 corresponds to original claim 2 dependent on claim 8; claims 11 and 15 correspond to original claim 3 dependent respectively on claims 8 and 10; claims 12, 16 and 17 correspond to original claim 4, dependent respectively on claims 8, 10 and 11; new claims 13 and 18 correspond to original claim 5, but depend respectively from claims 11 and 15; and new claim 14 depends from claim 10 and corresponds otherwise to original claim 6. Again, these claims should all be patentable because they depend from and incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 8.

No rejections have been imposed under §112, and applicants are proceeding in reliance thereof.

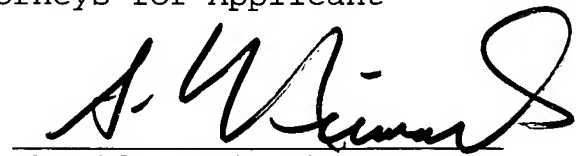
The prior art documents of record and not relied upon by the PTO have been noted, along with the implication that such documents are deemed by the PTO to be insufficiently material to warrant their application against any of applicants' claims.

Applicants believe that all issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed above in a manner favorable to allowance of the present application. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early formal allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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